

Suicide: When Prevention is the Only Cure

Thirteen minutes have passed since the last suicide in America. The person committing suicide is a white, middle-aged male. He will shoot himself with a firearm. At least six people will be intimately affected by the suicide. Suicides like this can be prevented, however. The Tom Karlin Foundation is working to prevent suicide by educating people about depression and other mental health issues. We are encouraging students to take action and to get their school district and community to become a part of this organization. Suicide can happen to anyone, and through this foundation, students can effectively learn how to apply their own skills to assist others who are in need of help.

People don't realize that suicide directly affects them whether or not they believe it does (NIMH). However, suicide affects every single person regardless of gender, race, creed, or any other component of a person's life. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in people ages fifteen to twenty-four, and the tenth leading cause of death worldwide (AAS). In 2012, young people made up 15% of all suicides in the United States, 6,090 deaths out of 40,600 in the US alone, one every thirteen minutes (AAS). In the entire world, approximately one million people kill themselves every year.

During adolescence, the brain is especially susceptible to emerging mental illnesses and thoughts of suicide, making suicide especially important to watch out for in teens (NIMH RSS). Among teenagers, girls are more likely to attempt suicide, but boys who attempt are 4.34 times more likely to succeed in taking their own life (AAS). In addition to this, LGBT youth are 3.4 times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youth because of discrimination, harassment, and statistically more instances of depression and other mental illness (AAS). In high school students, 15.8% of kids have seriously considered suicide, 12.8% have made a plan,

7.8% made at least one attempt, and 2.4% needed immediate medical attentions as a result of their attempt (AAS). Suicide is a leading issue among the youth of the world, and it is not subject to affecting one particular group of people, the idea and results of suicide affect every group of people indiscriminately, and everyone is susceptible (AAS).

One way we can fight suicide is by knowing the warning signs. If you know what to look for, you may be able to save a life. “Most teens who attempt or die by suicide have communicated their distress or plans to at least one other person” (AAS). Some signs you should look for that may indicate suicidal intentions include: “substance abuse, purposelessness, anxiety, hopelessness, anger, recklessness, mood changes, and withdrawal” (AAS). In some cases, even just “talking or writing about death” can be warning signs if accompanied with other signs of concern (AAS). In addition to this, “threatening to hurt or kill him or herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself; and/or, looking for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means” are all very obvious warning signs of suicide.

The Tom Karlin Foundation is trying to make everyone more aware of the mental health issues linked to suicide. Depression plays a key role in suicide, and their goal is to make people more aware of the symptoms, so they can get help. The foundation is “unique in it’s focus on teen suicide prevention and depression awareness” (Karlin). The organization is very involved in the community. They focus on “hosting community events like ultimate frisbee and Tom’s Turkey Trot” in order to promote awareness (Karlin). Besides just hosting community events, they work with “schools, churches, and the Johnson County Suicide Prevention Coalition” (Karlin). They have worked so hard to try and keep teens in this community safe, and we should give back to them by donating and participating in volunteer activities as well as educating ourselves.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the entire world. By the time you have finished reading this paper approximately four unique individuals with entire life stories, friends, loved ones, and even pets, have chosen to end their own life. Four people have chosen to kill themselves. In the teenage age group, it is the second leading cause of death, and it could happen to anyone. Research shows that suicide doesn't happen to just one group, it happens to everyone. Your best friend in the whole world could be losing an uphill battle right now, and you wouldn't even know it, they could become another tally-mark in the unending list of suicides just as easily as anyone else. So what can you do? Educate yourself. Go to <http://www.tomkarlinfoundation.com/> and educate yourself about depression and mental illnesses, become involved in the lives of your friends and loved ones. Learn the signs, be there for others, see the impacts, and educate yourself so you can become one of the people who can help keep another person from cutting their life short. <http://www.tomkarlinfoundation.com/> .

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